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SUBJECT Interview with Admiral Stansfield Turner

GORDON PETERSON: Please welcome to After Hours now, in the Channel 9 newsroom, Admiral Stansfield Turner, former Rhodes Scholar, former Director of the CIA under President Jimmy Carter.

Bad luck for you today.

ADMIRAL STANSFIELD TURNER: Why is that?

PETERSON: A few minutes before we started this program, I was in a bookstore looking for something else, and I came across a book by Dr. Ray Cline, former Deputy Director of the Central Intelligence Agency. He does not treat you well in this book, "The CIA Under Reagan, Bush and Casey." He doesn't even mention your name in the title.

TOM BRADEN: There's a lot about him in the back.

PETERSON: He says -- you're a nice fellow, is what he says. You had an excellent record, but in practice you showed little of the skill in interpersonal relations necessary for an effective leader of the CIA's clandestine services or its analytical staff.

Do you feel hurt by this?

ADMIRAL TURNER: No, I don't feel hurt, considering the source. Mr. Cline is a nice man. He was a good intelligence officer. He's just way out of date, out of touch, and only in touch with a lot of old-timers who are also out of date.

PETERSON: Well, he alleges in that book that the morale was going this way under George Bush. He says that maybe President

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Carter should have asked Bush to stay on. Then when you came along, again, nice fellow, but you didn't understand, and it started go down.

PAT BUCHANAN: One of the specifics is that -- and I -- it was reported, I guess, in 1977 -- was the so-called purging of the clandestine services. Not simply that some 200 were given immediate release and 800, I think, eventually; but that they given...

ADMIRAL TURNER: Those are both wrong figures. But I will admit to that.

BUCHANAN: Okay. But they were given 75-word telegrams that, in effect, said, "Go or be fired," a lot of people who had served a long time. (A) They said it was brutal, and (B) they said that the Admiral has destroyed the institutional memory of the agency.

ADMIRAL TURNER: Well, you can't destroy the institutional memory of an agency as large as the CIA, Pat, by asking some 200 people to leave over a two-year period. Not 800, only 200 people were affected, and it took two years to phase them out.

BUCHANAN: Were these all senior people, though?

ADMIRAL TURNER: No, they weren't. This was secretaries, clerks, and senior people.

BRADEN: Yeah. But isn't it true -- I hear from -- speaking of institutional memory, I'm an old boy, as you know. And I have heard from old friends of mine over there -- I guess they're near retirement -- saying that you really weren't interested in human intelligence. You weren't interested in spies. You were all out for machinery, and you got a lot of naval staff around you, and you kind of ran it like a battleship.

ADMIRAL TURNER: First of all, I didn't have any naval staff. Secondly, a couple of guys came with me. That's not a big staff.

Secondly, Tom, when did you start beat -- stop beating your wife? You see, you want me to say, one, I stopped paying attention to technical intelligence.

BRADEN: No. I was going to ask you, do you think the human intelligence is important?

ADMIRAL TURNER: Of course it is. It's terribly important.

BRADEN: Well, that's the charge Cline makes against you.

ADMIRAL TURNER: But what Cline doesn't understand and what most people don't understand is that human intelligence, while even more important today than in the past, is different. You can't bring into the intelligence environment two whole new ways of getting intelligence through technical means -- satellite photographs and signals intercepts -- and not affect how you do the human intelligence. See what I mean? Why would you...

BUCHANAN: Well, we've had satellite intelligence and the intercepts for years and years and years, long before you came over to the agency.

ADMIRAL TURNER: Well, I'm not saying these were changes just in my four years. I'm saying that over the last decade there's been a major change in how you conduct human intelligence, as affected by these others.

Pat, you would not go out and use a spy to collect information you could get with a satellite. Right?

BUCHANAN: Right. But let me tell you a true story. Right there in the Polish crisis, in one of the first nights of it, I talked to a very high official in the U.S. Government, who said, "There's cloud cover. We don't know what the Russians are doing. And we don't have many assets on the ground."

Now, this -- what Tom mentions is the criticism, is that after the Church-Mondale sort of attacks on the agency and after the Admiral came in and cleaned out the clandestine services, morale went down and a lot of the assets on the ground were de-emphasized, and the technical aspects were, to a degree, overemphasized.

ADMIRAL TURNER: Now, that's not true. In the first place, in the reductions I made, which were as a result of a study done before I got there and recommended by the agency, not by me -- in fact, I cut the size of the reduction by a third. I only took two-thirds of what they recommended to me. I did not let them take people from overseas. We didn't take the people from Poland, or wherever. We cut the headquarters fat, which the agency itself acknowledged that it had.

Secondly, when I arrived in the agency, 30 percent of the espionage department people were over 50 years of age. Now, you can't go out on the street and hire those people at middle levels. You have to start at the bottom and work up. There's no other training ground. Right?

BRADEN: Fair enough.

ADMIRAL TURNER: So we have to get some of them moving out in order to make room at the bottom.

BUCHANAN: But the phrase I've heard used is that it takes a long time to sandpaper someone in this area; and that when you've got a guy 50 years old, you've got an asset you can not replace with a young...

ADMIRAL TURNER: But the average age of retirement in that group is 53 1/2. That meant that in 3 1/2 years I was looking forward to a decimation by normal retirement of 30 percent of those people. And the first year I was there, we too in one-eighth of the number of people it takes to renew the corpus of that group. The last year I was there, we took in eight times as many.

In short, I was building for the long run. You can't just live on the old assets of the OSS forever, because they're going to die and quit.

[Confusion of voices]

BRADEN: They're never going to die. Old soldiers never die.

PETERSON: In the days when Tom Braden and his pals were snooping and pooping around Europe and elsewhere and gathering information...

ADMIRAL TURNER: Yes.

PETERSON: How does the human element today, in intelligence gathering, differ from...

BRADEN: I'd like to know.

ADMIRAL TURNER: Good point. All right.

Today, for instance, you'll get a photograph and it will show a new building on the outskirts of the capital of Country X. And you look at that and you then say to the signals people, "Let me know what that building is communicating with." And you find it's communicating with the Department of Nuclear Affairs in the capital. You then take a spy and you say, "I want you to get in there and find out if that's the nuclear weapon department or the nuclear power plant department." In the old days, the spy had to go out and find the building, find out where it was connected to, and then get in the building. You see what I mean? You take two-thirds of that job and you do it by technical means. And it lets the spy focus on what he's good at, what is really important.

BRADEN: Okay. Well now, look, that brings up a question. I guess it was under your -- your Judy, I guess. Why was our intelligence so terribly bad in Iran?

ADMIRAL TURNER: It wasn't.

BRADEN: Well, on the evidence, Admiral, it's got to be bad. I mean we didn't know what this crowd was. Apparently, we didn't know anything about Khomeini. We didn't know anything about anything. We were taken by surprise.

BUCHANAN: In terms of what was known and gotten out about Khomeini, as a single example, there was very, very little. People were saying, "This is a gentle old priest," and the Ramsey Clark school of thought that he was going to bring democracy to Iran.

BRADEN: Well, even Mike Wallace. Remember Mike Wallace went over, interviewed him, came back and told us -- he told you and me...

BUCHANAN: ...it was a failure of journalists too, but...

BRADEN: "Why," he said, "he's a holy man."

PETERSON: He's a holy terror.

ADMIRAL TURNER: I never heard him given that kind of treatment in the intelligence community.

Now, what happened, in my opinion, in Iran is that we did observe for a long time there was a lot of discontent, a lot of problems; centers of discontent for political reasons, for religious reasons, for economic reasons.

Now, what we did not anticipate -- and I'm not just trying to whitewash things, 'cause we didn't do as well as we should have -- was that these centers of discontent would coalesce around a 79-year-old cleric, that he could bring this together into a critical mass. Why he did that was not because he was so good, because they all had this anti-Shah element. And they've fallen apart since then, since they don't have a Shah.

But the second thing we, frankly, overlooked was an assumption that the Shah, when it came to the crunch, would use his police and military force, that he would not let this discontent get out of control. And I think that was a reasonable assumption.

BUCHANAN: Wait a minute now. In defense of the late Shah, I think he indicated that James Earl Carter, Jr. and the Administration never gave him any indication as to whether he

6

should turn loose his troops or not.

BRADEN: Yeah, but that wouldn't be Turner's responsibility.

BUCHANAN: No. But I mean -- I mean he says he couldn't -- this was an Administration...

ADMIRAL TURNER: Pat,...

BUCHANAN: ...and Administration decision.

ADMIRAL TURNER: ...the Shaw was a big boy. I didn't think he would sit there and let his throne go because President Carter didn't tell him to move, or anybody. I thought he'd use his troops when the crunch came.

BUCHANAN: The United States general that went right into to Iran, in effect, to tell the Shah not to use his troops.

ADMIRAL TURNER: Now, just a second. You've got the facts mixed. General Huyser didn't go in until well after the die was cast. He went in after the Shah left the country physically. So that has nothing to do with it. You're talking now -- I'm talking about the period October 1978. They had big riots about the middle -- early November, 4th of November. Once those riots took place, the die was pretty well cast.

BUCHANAN: Do you think the Shah should have used his troops?

ADMIRAL TURNER: I don't like to say he should have, because it would have been very bloody.

BUCHANAN: Well, it was very bloody afterwards.

ADMIRAL TURNER: Well, after Khomeini got in, it was.

BUCHANAN: Far bloodier than it would have been if they'd put down the disorders.

ADMIRAL TURNER: It probably would have been.

PETERSON: Wasn't it just a question of time, though, for the Shah?

ADMIRAL TURNER: I think so. But I think he could have bought real time, years.

BRADEN: Let me ask you another question about that.

ADMIRAL TURNER: If he'd stepped in in September or

October.

BUCHANAN: So you think he should have stepped in.

ADMIRAL TURNER: If I were in his shoes, I certainly think he should have. Yes.

BUCHANAN: You'd have sent the army in after the...

ADMIRAL TURNER: And I had every reason to believe that he would. I was wrong.

BUCHANAN: Did you all -- all right, let me ask you. Did you all communicate to the Shah, knowing yourselves, by then, the situation was getting serious, "Look, Your Majesty, get off the dime. If you want to stay in power, and we want you in power, get off the dime and move"?

ADMIRAL TURNER: Well, that's the White House, not the intelligence end, what they communicated with him and...

BUCHANAN: Well, you were fairly close to the President.

ADMIRAL TURNER: Well, but those are still, in my opinion, secretive things. And I...

BRADEN: I want to ask you this about Iran, Admiral. It has been charged -- and I would think that the surface evidence proves there might be something to it, because I remember even back in my day it was true, even in my day.

ADMIRAL TURNER: Way back then?

BRADEN: Way back then, that the Shah didn't want the Central Intelligence Agency to be in touch with any of the dissident groups, that he wanted to -- he wanted us to stay out of it and let Savak handle it. And isn't -- doesn't that contribute to a weakness on the part of the agency, if they can't -- if they can't talk to Khomeini, they can't talk to any of these religious leaders?

ADMIRAL TURNER: Well, the Shah didn't want us talking to his dissidents. And no other leader of a dictatorial country wants you talking to their dissidents.

BRADEN: What I'm asking you is this: Did you do it anyhow?

ADMIRAL TURNER: Of course we did.

BRADEN: Good.

BRADEN: But not as much as maybe we should have.

BUCHANAN: Admiral, you used the phrase, the dictatorial regime. And yet, you think the Shah should have used guns to stay in power.

ADMIRAL TURNER: Now, you're putting a lot of words in my mouth there, Pat.

BUCHANAN: All right. You don't think he should have used guns.

ADMIRAL TURNER: I'm just saying had he used...

BRADEN: He didn't say that.

ADMIRAL TURNER: I'm saying that I made the assumption he would use the guns. I'm not going to make that judgment that you're asking to me.

BUCHANAN: Well, you said if you were in his shoes, you would have used them.

ADMIRAL TURNER: If I were in his shoes, I would have put keeping my throne pretty high. But I'm still not saying to you that I'm passing moral judgment on whether the Shah was right or wrong. I think there's a lot to be said for the Shah, when he finally faced up to it, not using force, because he realized what a bloody thing he would be.

[Confusion of voices]

BRADEN: You didn't mean anything wrong by dictator. You should have said monarchical. You'd have been right then.

ADMIRAL TURNER: Right. Yes.

BRADEN: I want to ask him about one more thing on his watch.

PETERSON: Let's take a break

BRADEN: Terpil and Wilson.

PETERSON: Terpil and Wilson. And I want to ask about Libyaan hit squads.

BUCHANAN: And also Reagan's...

PETERSON: We could be here all night.

BUCHANAN: ...wise executive order.

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PETERSON: We're with Admiral Stansfield Turner.

Tom, you had a question. You can't remember what it was. I remember mine.

What about these so-called Libyan hit squads.

BUCHANAN: Terpil and...

BRADEN: Oh, yeah. I wanted to ask him about -- go ahead. Go ahead. Go ahead.

PETERSON: Is this disinformation, this story about a hit squad coming over here to hit our...

ADMIRAL TURNER: Well, Gordon, I don't have any facts about this sort of intelligence. It's all since my time. I have no question in my mind that they must have received some kind of a report. We receive those fairly regularly.

PETERSON: Why make it public?

ADMIRAL TURNER: Oh, it's terrible to make it public. It was a big mistake.

BUCHANAN: That was the press's fault, wasn't it? I mean they ferreted they thing out and then headlines...

BRADEN: Oh, come on. Somebody leaked it.

ADMIRAL TURNER: Somebody leaked it.

PETERSON: Somebody had to tell the press.

ADMIRAL TURNER: That's a shame. That hurts. It hurts your ability to control the situation. And it got the thing all hyped up. I think the Administration went too far in hyping it up. But that's a value judgment.

PETERSON: Think there was anything to it?

ADMIRAL TURNER: I can't believe there wasn't some kind of a report. And a report like that, in my opinion, normally has a 10-15 percent credibility. But you've got to act on that. I mean it's against the President of the United States. I don't blame them for going to general quarters, even on a low-credibility report.

BRADEN: Admiral, let me ask you about something that I think you must know something about, and that's Terpil and

10

Wilson. And there's a recent charge, which is kind of pretty well documented, that they were in touch, or have been in touch, and under the command of two people that worked for you.

ADMIRAL TURNER: All I can say is I just read that today. If there was any such contact after April 1977, it was direct insubordination to my orders. Because in April 1977, I called in 500 of the top people in the espionage department and I sent a message to all the overseas posts, and I said, "This agency is having nothing to do with Edwin P. Wilson. We have no connection with him, and nobody will have any connection with him."

Now, if they maintained it after that time, it was against that rule.

BRADEN: What was it that made you to make...

BUCHANAN: Were those two officials called in? Were they part of the group that got the word about Edwin P. Wilson?

ADMIRAL TURNER: Absolutely.

BRADEN: What led you to make that decision about Wilson?

ADMIRAL TURNER: Because I had discovered that we had two people in the Central Intelligence Agency in April of 1977, six weeks after I came into office, who were working for Edwin P. Wilson at the same time they were on the Central Intelligence Agency's payroll. And that had been the case for some months, and it had been known in the Central Intelligence Agency. And after three days of knowing that, I fired them. I kicked them out the door, because we just couldn't have any association with a fellow like that.

BRADEN: Well, what do you suppose that your DDP was doing? And I guess he was the Assistant DDP?

PETERSON: Your DDP?

BRADEN: Well, Deputy Director for Plans. The covert agency guy. What was his name, Shockley?

ADMIRAL TURNER: Shackley.

BRADEN: Shackley. What was he doing -- what was he doing after that order came out still, apparently, giving orders to Wilson and Terpil?

ADMIRAL TURNER: Now, in the morning paper, if you read it carefully, Tom, Shackley says that he had no such connection

11

with Edwin P. Wilson after September 1976. That's six months before I'm talking about.

BRADEN: Before your order. Yeah.

ADMIRAL TURNER: Because he says that at that time he realized what Wilson was doing, and he cut those ties. And I believe Shackley.

BRADEN: That's interesting, because what ties would he have had beforehand?

ADMIRAL TURNER: Well, he was a personal friend of Shackley's. They knew each other. And you know the Central Intelligence Agency is always anxious to find out from Americans who are working in overseas countries what they know about those countries.

BRADEN: What goes on. Yeah.

ADMIRAL TURNER: That's a perfectly legitimate thing. It's only when you find the American is doing something illegal that you want to wash your hands of him, of course. But if he's doing something perfectly proper and is willing to tell us what he knows, that's fine.

BUCHANAN: Well, speaking of something illegal -- let me just change the subject quickly. One of your predecessors, Richard Helms, testified and was, I guess, indicted for perjury or making a misstatement, or something like that, and pled -- or whatever happened. Anyhow, when he was convicted, as it were, and stood before the judge, he was sort of read the riot act by Barrington Parker. And an awful lot of people contributed right away to pay the fine.

What did you think about the prosecution of Richard Helms by his own government when he had testified in Congress? He had an oath to keep quiet about what he was talking about and he had an oath to -- in effect, to tell the truth before Congress. What do you think of that episode?

ADMIRAL TURNER: Well, Helms was put in a position that was much more difficult than I was ever put in, because there wasn't the oversight process in the Congress in those days. He didn't have these two Intelligence Committees. And he was put in this difficult bind as to whether he would tell a Foreign Relations Committee something that was terribly sensitive and secret about intelligence. And he chose not to.

BUCHANAN: Break one oath or break the other, in effect.

ADMIRAL TURNER: Well, I don't think it was quite that

cut and dried. My point is that since we have the oversight process...

BUCHANAN: What about that case?

ADMIRAL TURNER: About that case? He was in a very difficult bind.

BUCHANAN: How do you think he conducted himself? He was the Director then?

ADMIRAL TURNER: I think he did the best he could under the circumstances.

BUCHANAN: Do you think he should have been prosecuted?

ADMIRAL TURNER: I'm afraid that that's the case, because of the laws of this country.

BUCHANAN: But should he have been? Should he have been?

ADMIRAL TURNER: But what he should have -- what he could have done, had he been -- had it been my case, was go to an Intelligence Committee -- he didn't have one...

BUCHANAN: I know. He didn't have one.

ADMIRAL TURNER: ...and say, "Look, I've got a problem here."

BUCHANAN: I'm trying to get your judgment on how he conducted...

ADMIRAL TURNER: I'm not going to pass a moral judgment on Mr. Helms, because neither you nor I can reconstruct in our minds the real situation that...

BUCHANAN: No moral judgment...

BRADEN: Look, he did, Pat. He said -- he said, "Could I go into executive session?"

BUCHANAN: Well, that would have immediately said, "Look, there's something here."

BRADEN: Well, I know. But he did ask that, and they didn't give it to him. And so he did what he -- I think he had to do. He lied to them.

BUCHANAN: All right. Then you don't think he should have been prosecuted.

13

BRADEN: Well, you know, if you look at the whole thing -- I agree with the Admiral that this is the law. You're not supposed to lie under oath. Okay?

BUCHANAN: And you're not supposed to reveal secrets.

BRADEN: And you're not supposed to reveal secrets. So I think the bind he describes is a good one. And it seems to me, in the long run, it came off pretty well.

BUCHANAN: Well, when a guy is prosecuted and read the riot act by a federal judge?

BRADEN: Pat, he was fined \$1500, which his friends made up in half an hour.

BUCHANAN: In effect, publicly disgraces for doing what he thought was his duty.

BRADEN: Oh, he wasn't publicly disgraced. He's an important person in this town and his opinions are listened to by very good people.

PETERSON: Admiral, let me ask you -- I heard you say once that you would not rule out absolutely using American journalists in the intelligence-gathering process. I heard you say that once.

ADMIRAL TURNER: That's correct. Oh, that's true.

PETERSON: And Mr. Rosenthal of the New York Times was horrified.

ADMIRAL TURNER: Abe and I have argued that one for years now.

PETERSON: Why did you say that?

ADMIRAL TURNER: He should not be horrified. I have also made it very clear, Gordon, that it was not my policy to use journalists. But there is no way, if a terrorist operation were about to hurt a lot of people and we really thought an American journalist were the one who could -- one person who could help us scotch it, that I wouldn't turn to such a journalist. And I think it's silly to think that any one of you wouldn't help us if you were just the person who could do something in a situation like that. You're patriotic Americans too.

BUCHANAN: Well, anybody would agree with, let's say, a terrorist operation. What about if, you know, a journalist -- say we're in 1956, something like that, and the journalists are the only ones who can get around in the Soviet Union well. And

14

we have our diplomats there and our agents who are diplomats. How would you think about, look -- call in a journalist and say, "Look. You're getting out to Sverdlovsk. It's a closed city. They're giving you a big break here. We want you to look for this and this and this anthrax place, and we'd like you to look for this"? What do you think of that?

ADMIRAL TURNER: I wouldn't deny you your constitutional right to help your government, if you wanted to. But I wouldn't pressure you to do it.

BUCHANAN: But you would ask.

ADMIRAL TURNER: Sure I would ask. And if you didn't want to do it...

BUCHANAN: I don't see anything wrong with that. I think Rosenthal's all wet.

BRADEN: I don't know when this all happened. Back in Allen Dulles's day, journalists would see something -- Allen would say, "You're going to Egypt. You're going to see Nasser. Now, let me know what kind of a guy he is." That sort of thing. "What's he up to?" There was a journalist -- I knew journalists who'd come in and talk to Allen, have a cup of coffee, talk to him. What's wrong with that?

BUCHANAN: The argument they use, Rosenthal uses is this. If one fellow goes into Sverdlovsk and he's bringing out information and it's for Turner and they found out, all journalists are suspect. All journalistic sources then tend to dry up to a degree, and thereby democracy suffers. And therefore the secular priests, us journalists, should not be tampered with.

ADMIRAL TURNER: Why, that's the most naive statement anybody ever made. Not yours, but Rosenthal's.

BUCHANAN: That's Rosenthal's. Right.

ADMIRAL TURNER: Because the Soviets certainly believe that every American journalist works for the CIA.

BRADEN: Sure.

ADMIRAL TURNER: And no matter what we say, they'll believe that.

PETERSON: Whether they believe it or not, the American public does not believe that.

BUCHANAN: How about using Peace Corps volunteers helping out the CIA?

15

ADMIRAL TURNER: No, we don't do that, and that's been ruled out.

BUCHANAN: I know it's been ruled out, but should it be ruled out?

ADMIRAL TURNER: I think that's probably worthwhile.

BUCHANAN: Why?

ADMIRAL TURNER: It doesn't excite me tremendously one way or the other. Because they're out in the field there with working-level people in these countries. They're really out in the bush.

BUCHANAN: How about missionaries?

ADMIRAL TURNER: If somebody feels, "Gosh, they're spying," you know, they might have retribution taken against them.

BUCHANAN: How about missionaries, Protestant missionaries, Catholic missionaries in Africa, Third World countries?

ADMIRAL TURNER: I look on them just as I do the journalists. Certainly not a policy of using them...

PETERSON: But if he can do you a little good, if Father Gilhooley can...

ADMIRAL TURNER: In a very important situation.

BUCHANAN: Why exempt the Peace Corps, then? You've got missionaries and journalists.

BRADEN: Well, because in the Peace Corps, if you ever get the idea that the Peace Corps is CIA, it destroys the Peace Corps. It doesn't destroy the journalist.

BUCHANAN: Well, if you ever get the idea that some missionary...

PETERSON: It doesn't destroy the journalist?

BRADEN: No.

PETERSON: Ask Sam Jaffe about that.

BRADEN: Oh, well. Sam Jaffe was up to -- well, never mind.

BUCHANAN: All right. But look, if you do these mis-

16

sionaries, who are, like the Peace Corps, out in the bush in Latin America, why not the Peace Corps? Are they superior?

BRADEN: No. Because the Peace Corps, Pat, is based upon the ideal of service.

BUCHANAN: What is a missionary based on?

BRADEN: The ideal of disinterested service. I would say the missionary is the same. And moreover, the Peace Corps goes into areas where they won't take any other Americans.

BUCHANAN: That makes them good agents.

BRADEN: Well, all the more reason not to use them, I say.

PETERSON: While you gentlemen debate this, we'll take a little break, and we'll be back with Admiral Turner in just a moment.

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PETERSON: Pravda says, Admiral Turner, today a number of CIA agents posing as diplomats have been caught recently engaging in espionage, sabotage, and terror -- that's a quote -- against the Soviet Union, and one of their recruits has been executed by a Soviet firing squad.

Every time I go by that embassy down there, I feel like I'm going to get sterilized, at best, or electrocuted, at worst. Are they beating us?

ADMIRAL TURNER: No, they're not beating us. Our intelligence is better than the Soviets', I believe, in every respect.

I don't know anything about this, of course. It's all something new. It's probably a disinformation story.

PETERSON: How much of that is there around the world?

BUCHANAN: Disinformation. What do you mean by that?

ADMIRAL TURNER: The Soviets putting out stories that are not true and are intended to influence opinion in the Free World. They do that all the time.

BUCHANAN: You read the book "The Spike," haven't you?

ADMIRAL TURNER: Yes.

17

BRADEN: Well, they're putting out stories that some of those fellows inside Poland are CIA agents.

BUCHANAN: Is there some validity, the nonsense of the novel aside, to "The Spike," about the Soviets trying to cozen journalists and others and bring them on to the point where the Americans are putting out disinformation?

ADMIRAL TURNER: Oh, certainly. Certainly there is. I think it was a little overstated in "The Spike."

BUCHANAN: As it is always.

ADMIRAL TURNER: And I think "The Spike" was a little naive in the degree to which it said high-level officials in the government would succumb to this kind of thing. But it's certainly something we've got to be on our guard against at all times.

BUCHANAN: When you were in the agency, did you have any idea or suspicion or did you get some information that someone at a level that was mentioned in "The Spike," let's say a deputy assistant for national security, anyone at that level or above had been compromised?

ADMIRAL TURNER: No.

BUCHANAN: None.

Any reports of people up on Capitol Hill being compromised or working for someone else?

ADMIRAL TURNER: No.

BUCHANAN: None.

ADMIRAL TURNER: No.

BRADEN: ...about your problem with getting out of the agency, because we all face it. You're a rookie at this. But I hear, on, I think, pretty good authority, that the Saudi Arabians made an official and specific complaint about you quite recently on something you'd written about the AWACS, and they said you shouldn't be writing this because you were a former Director of Central Intelligence.

PETERSON: The Saudis said that?

BRADEN: The Saudis said that.

PETERSON: Since when do they tell us what we...

BRADEN: I think the Admiral knows I'm right. I don't know whether he wants to say it.

ADMIRAL TURNER: I don't know whether you're right or not. But neither the Saudis nor any foreign country are going to curb my freedom of speech. Now, I have to be discreet and I can't tell secrets. And there was nothing in my article on the AWACS that wasn't in the public media in every regard. I was not in favor of giving the AWACS to Saudi Arabia. Ironically...

BUCHANAN: Selling, you mean. Selling.

ADMIRAL TURNER: Selling it.

Ironically, the whole article said, because I want to maintain as close ties with the Saudis as possible. But the Saudis still took offense at it.

PETERSON: Let me ask you about President Reagan's executive order expanding CIA activity on the domestic scene. I know you don't like that.

ADMIRAL TURNER: Well, it's got a couple of good points and a couple of bad ones.

The good points are that it's a much more positive executive order than either President Ford's or President Carter's. It really shows the President wants good intelligence, and that's encouraging and helpful.

BUCHANAN: Did not Carter want good intelligence, too?

ADMIRAL TURNER: Yes, but it didn't come through in the tone of the executive order, Pat. That's what I'm saying. It was a more curb-things executive order, because it was written in the atmosphere of the Church Committee still, you see.

BUCHANAN: It was 1977 when Carter came in. The Church Committee was dead in '74-75. Why did Carter...

ADMIRAL TURNER: No. It started '75-76, so it wasn't all that far behind. But even -- and the Carter order was very similar to the Ford order, which was written in '76.

Now, the other good part about it is it somewhat curbs the authority of the Attorney General to interfere in intelligence operations, and I think it's put a better balance there between the Director of Central Intelligence and the Attorney General.

The bad points are that it permits the Central Intelligence Agency to intrude into the lives of American citizens.

BUCHANAN: How so?

ADMIRAL TURNER: And it also de-emphasizes both White House control over intelligence and congressional oversight over intelligence. Now, it does these things in the name of strengthening and giving more freedom to our intelligence activities. In spite of that, it's going to weaken activities.

BUCHANAN: Okay. What can they do specifically, and you mentioned, in terms of the private lives of American citizens in this country?

ADMIRAL TURNER: If they believe that there is significant foreign intelligence available in the domestic scene, they can go investigate into it, look into your life and mine.

BUCHANAN: Well, the FBI can do that right now, can't they?

ADMIRAL TURNER: That's the reason you don't want the CIA...

BRADEN: I don't understand. We made an agreement way, way back. It was always abided by. The FBI takes care of the -- in here. And if you have somebody coming over, you pass him over. I don't see what...

BUCHANAN: Well, what is -- what really is the problem? CIA agents are honorable Americans. They're well-trained guys.

ADMIRAL TURNER: Ah, no. They're not trained in spying on Americans and complying with American law. They're trained in exactly the opposite. They're trained in working overseas and not worrying about the law. And when you try to put them in this, it's unfair.

BUCHANAN: But isn't this like somebody from the Department of the Interior taking over a job that originally belongs to the Department of Agriculture? What's the difference.

ADMIRAL TURNER: It is not. It is not. The whole skill levels are different.

BUCHANAN: What will they do? What will they do?

ADMIRAL TURNER: What did they do in the '50s and '60s in intruding in...

BUCHANAN: What did they do?

ADMIRAL TURNER: They opened mail. They drugged Americans.

BUCHANAN: All right. The drug thing, obviously, was reckless.

ADMIRAL TURNER: They followed the Weathermen. They kept files on Americans by the hundreds of thousands.

BUCHANAN: What is wrong with following the Weathermen? If they'd found a couple of the Weathermen, we might not have had those fellows killed up in Nyack, New York.

BRADEN: Well, I don't think Jim Angleton should have opened all the businessmen's mail that he did.

BUCHANAN: It was mail going to the Soviet Union.

BRADEN: Let the FBI take care of that.

BUCHANAN: The mail-opening was overseas mail, wasn't it?

ADMIRAL TURNER: It was going overseas and coming into the United States.

PETERSON: Do you want people opening your mail?

BUCHANAN: I'm sure when I sent White House letters back to the Soviet Union to thank people for taking care of us on trips, they looked at it. Who cares?

PETERSON: Well, I care.

BUCHANAN: It's a case where people's rights -- they didn't know their rights were violated until they got the Freedom of Information Act to look up and say, "Hey, my rights were violated." I mean if it adds to the national security...

PETERSON: It doesn't, does it? That's the question.

ADMIRAL TURNER: I looked into this very carefully. And a year ago last month, before I left the agency, I polled the top people and I said, "Turn in to our chief counsel all those things you might do if we didn't have any restrictions." And when the list came back to me, there was only one thing on it that I thought might have ever produced good intelligence.

BUCHANAN: Well, they might have thought this was sort of let a hundred flowers bloom, and then Turner's going to cut their heads off when he finds out.

ADMIRAL TURNER: No, no.

BRADEN: ...he hadn't made himself clear at that point.

21

ADMIRAL TURNER: But on top of that, my own experience in four years would indicate there's very little to be gained.

BUCHANAN: Why would they want it? Mr. Inman, Admiral Inman is a bright man, he's an intelligent man. Bill Casey's a solid citizen. Why would they ask for these kinds of authorities unless they thought it could do some good in terms of the national security? They're not the type of fellows who want to go around reading people's mail or chasing Weathermen or something like that. Why would they ask for it?

ADMIRAL TURNER: You know why? You know why I think?

BUCHANAN: Why?

ADMIRAL TURNER: Because they received very bad advice during the campaign and the transition period from people, like him, who were out of date.

BUCHANAN: Wait a minute. Bobby -- Mr. Inman...

PETERSON: Ray Cline.

ADMIRAL TURNER: Cline.

BUCHANAN: I know this is Cline. But...

ADMIRAL TURNER: And then they got...

BUCHANAN: Inman worked over this order himself.

ADMIRAL TURNER: Now wait a minute, Pat. They got out on a limb. They went out in March with a radical change to the executive order, one that Inman rejected totally, one that the public rejected, one that Goldwater rejected. And they have progressively watered it down for 10 months. And unfortunately, they couldn't put their campaign rhetoric completely to bed. And as they watered it down, they still left these several objectionable pieces in it, because they just couldn't eat their words enough. That's too bad.

BUCHANAN: All right. You mean that Admiral Inman is being influenced in asking for these things, not that he thinks they'll do some good, but simply because they correspond with some campaign rhetoric?

ADMIRAL TURNER: I think...

BRADEN: There'd be a tendency over there, Pat, not to get in -- interfere with any of Reagan's campaign promises.

BUCHANAN: Tom, if you got a backlash on this executive

order, I don't think intelligent men, knowing a backlash was coming, would ask for it unless they thought it would do some good.

BRADEN: I frankly don't see the importance...

ADMIRAL TURNER: You just don't remember your days in the government well enough.

BRADEN: I don't see the importance in it that the Admiral maintains. But I...

BUCHANAN: People don't look for political fights.

BRADEN: I must say the old, old, old rule which the CIA began with was that the FBI would take the domestic and the CIA...

BUCHANAN: Tom, you're too wedded to tradition. You're too wedded to tradition.

PETERSON: An FBI trained in American law and the human rights contained therein, or the rights of individuals contained therein.

BUCHANAN: Would you agree with this, though, this proposition: that Mondale and Church and the rest of them overplayed any abuses committed by the CIA, and the damage they did far outweighed any harm the CIA did to the civil rights and the human rights of American citizens?

ADMIRAL TURNER: I think the media has a large role to play here in overhyping. I think the excesses of the CIA were grossly exaggerated in the press.

BUCHANAN: Who played to the media? Who played to the media?

ADMIRAL TURNER: But the problem that you are encouraging with this new executive order is that the CIA, if they make a mistake in intruding into American lives, will then be subject to another wave of that same kind of criticism. And that has been the most injurious thing to our intelligence capabilities in this country since World War II. And we can't afford it again.

BUCHANAN: Is something wrong, then, with the American press that it takes mistakes, or even blunders, like this and feeds on them?

ADMIRAL TURNER: Of course there is.

BUCHANAN: Okay. Then the fault might be with the media.

BRADEN: Let me ask you this, Admiral. Are there any...

PETERSON: ...shouldn't write about this.

ADMIRAL TURNER: Of course you should write about it. But you should be a little more balanced.

BRADEN: Are there any family jewels that you know about that are still left over there? Wasn't it Bill Colby who took the family jewels up to the Congress?

BUCHANAN: The dart pistol.

ADMIRAL TURNER: I'm pleased to tell you there are some secrets they really do keep over there.

BRADEN: Are they family jewels?

ADMIRAL TURNER: It's hard to keep. I don't want to use the word family jewels, because everybody on this TV tube will interpret it differently. You have one definition and I have another. There are some really good secrets in that organization, and I'm proud that they are able to keep them. But it's not easy, with the leaks we have in our government today. And that's one of the most serious problems our country faces.

BUCHANAN: You know the best way to keep the press from writing about these things is stop leaking?

ADMIRAL TURNER: That's right. I agree with you entirely. And until some President fires some Cabinet- or sub-Cabinet-level official because he gave a background briefing and got off the turf, you know, you're not going to do it.

BRADEN: Why would the Glomar Explorer suddenly hit the front page? I know a fellow over there who said, "That was the last secret we had."

BUCHANAN: Well, that was known for months. I mean the press people knew that and they sort of set up the breaking of the Glomar Explorer.

PETERSON: That's interesting. During the war, as you well know, the press did sit on secrets a lot.

BUCHANAN: Sure. They sat on the code thing, I think.

ADMIRAL TURNER: But now the press uses the excuse, "If I don't break it, you'll break it." Or, "If you don't break it,

he'll break it."

BRADEN: The sort of thing we were talking about before.

PETERSON: ...if ABC's not there...

ADMIRAL TURNER: That's right.

BRADEN: You've got to be a [unintelligible] because there's competition.

BUCHANAN: James Reston. The New York Times had the story in advance of the Bay of Pigs. They didn't run with it because the Administration -- I think Kennedy called them up and said, "Don't go with it." Should the press have gone with the Bay of Pigs story before the invasion?

ADMIRAL TURNER: Each one of those has got to be an individual conscious decision by the press.

BUCHANAN: Right.

ADMIRAL TURNER: And I don't think you can have a rule for that. I don't want to have a law for that.

BUCHANAN: No, not a law, not a rule. Should they have gone with it?

ADMIRAL TURNER: Well, you're asking people on this program, Pat, to second-guess the moral decisions of people in the past. And I'm not going to do it.

BUCHANAN: It's a 20-year-old decision.

PETERSON: Subsequently, they said that they felt they should have gone with it.

BUCHANAN: They felt they should. I don't think they should.

BRADEN: John Kennedy made a crack about that long afterwards. He told Orville Dreyfus (?) -- and he was the fellow...

BUCHANAN: Maybe he'd have stopped it. Yeah.

BRADEN: John Kennedy said, "Look, maybe it would have been better if you'd have gone with it big and I wouldn't have -- I wouldn't have been able to do it."

ADMIRAL TURNER: But that's not the way to make policy for our country.

25

BRADEN: No. No, I think...

ADMIRAL TURNER: You've got to make deliberate decisions.

BRADEN: No, I would agree. I think the press should not have printed that. I would agree with you.

PETERSON: Do you have a favorite or a most fascinating spy or fascinating character that you've met in your days at the CIA?

ADMIRAL TURNER: Oh, not one that I could talk about.

PETERSON: Yeah. That's what I was afraid of.

Okay. Thank you very much, Admiral Stansfield Turner.